

Chris leaves an indelible impression on his very many friends amongst Members and staff. A convinced European from the first hour, he was a fine public servant with strong convictions. Demanding of others, he gave of himself. Always dedicated to his work, he inspired loyalty and affection in his colleagues, even though his habit of asking difficult questions would sometimes put his hierarchy in a spin.

But it is as a great and loyal friend that we remember him: his love of life, his kindness, his enthusiasm for everything from skiing to books or to good-natured gossip over a good meal. To this list of qualities, and to his wonderful sense of humour, I must add his extraordinary courage and fortitude, particularly over the last two years. I saw him a week before he died, frail but still with his ineradicable sense of humour and bravery.

We will all miss him deeply.

JULIAN PRIESTLEY,
Secretary General.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO VINCE BAKER

HON. SCOTT McINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 13, 2001

Mr. McINNIS. Mr. Speaker, it is with a solemn heart that I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to an icon of the Pueblo, Colorado community. Vince Baker recently passed away at the age of 88, and as his family mourns his loss, I think it is appropriate to remember Vince and pay tribute to him for his contributions to his community.

Vince owned and operated Vince Baker Motors, a car dealership located in Pueblo. He went on to become President of Modern Trailer Sales, Director of Western Acceptance Corporation, and managed a regional General Motors distributorship. Vince's success was evident in the creation of over 30 automobile agencies in Colorado and New Mexico.

Vince's true love was working and interacting with people. This became clear later in his life when Vince served as a motivational speaker and a writer. His communication skills served as motivational tools for others that were widely used throughout the automobile industry. In addition, Vince was a contributing writer for a motor magazine for over eight years.

Mr. Speaker, it is with profound sadness that we remember Vince Baker. He was known for his kind heart and a gentle demeanor he displayed throughout his life. Vince Baker will be remembered and missed not only by his family but also by a grateful community.

IN SUPPORT OF EDUCATION TAX CREDITS

HON. BOB SCHAFFER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 13, 2001

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to express my excitement for the next phase of education reform which will empower parents to make the best educational choices for their children. The bill before us today, the

"No Child Left Behind Act," will offer some small measure of parental options in the form of supplemental services for after-school tutoring and other educational resources. These reforms are an important step toward educational choice, but the real victory for American schoolchildren will be found in the Administration's next education reform initiative—education tax credits.

Shortly after President Bush took office in January of this year, he announced an innovative plan to offer children in failing schools the option of attending a private school of their choice. The proposal would have implemented much needed competition into our education system today and would have benefited all schoolchildren, public and private alike. Unfortunately, the President's proposal is not a part of the bill before us today. I am pleased to report, however, the President has indicated his full support and leadership for parental choice through tax credits in the next session of the 107th Congress.

In the remainder of my time, I'd like to discuss some of the promising benefits and opportunities afforded children through education tax credit legislation.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, the current tax system financially penalizes parents who send their children to schools other than the government-owned schools assigned to their children. A tax credit for educational expenses would allow parents to redirect their own money to pay expenses at a school that best meets the needs of their child.

Parents across the country are becoming increasingly concerned about their children's education. More than \$125 billion in federal funds have been directed toward K-12 education programs over the past 25 years, but these increases in financial investment have not been accompanied by similar gains in student achievement. American children languish far behind their international peers in math and science; the racial achievement gap on test scores is widening; and test scores on the nation's report card (the National Assessment of Educational Progress) have remained largely stagnant over the past 20 years.

Any business that received such poor profit margins in return for such large financial investments would be forced to close its doors, yet the federal government continues to funnel billions of American taxpayer dollars annually toward the government's education monopoly.

Additional money, resources and programs—with all of the attached federal regulations and mandates—will not solve the nation's education crisis. These methods have been tested and tried without positive results. Fundamental changes to the structure of our education system are needed and this can only happen by relying on the power of free markets by empowering parents with the ability to select the best school options for their children, whether it is a government-owned, private or home school.

Education tax credits are emerging as one of the most effective vehicles to encourage parental choice in education around the country. To date, six states have enacted some form of tax credit for elementary and secondary educational expenses—Arizona, Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois, Florida and Pennsylvania. A tax credit at the federal level would enable families to save on their federal income taxes, which are typically much higher than state income taxes. Nine states do not have a

state income tax, therefore, a federal tax credit is their only option to receive educational assistance in this form. Moreover, federal education tax credits can provide a massive cash infusion toward a competitive, free-market education system in America.

Mr. Speaker, there are many different kinds of tax credits, including credits for educational expenses incurred by families and credits for individual and corporate donations to educational scholarship foundations. The details of the President's legislation are forthcoming, but I think if we look to the example of education tax credits in the states, we will observe the exciting educational opportunities for children. In Arizona, for example, the state legislature passed a \$500 tax credit for donations to scholarship foundations. The law has been effective since 1997, and since that time the number of scholarship organizations has grown from 2 to 34. Nearly \$14 million was raised during that time through the donations of 30,000 taxpayers. Arizona's tax credit could potentially raise \$75 million in scholarships annually, according to some estimates.

Another indication of the promise of tax credits is the overwhelming public support for such opportunities. A recent poll by McLaughlin and Associates, however, shows broad based support for education tax credits that cuts across party lines, ideologies, income levels, age and race. The poll found that seven out of 10 likely voters support providing \$2,000 tax credits per child for all educational expenses, including tuition. Self-described liberals gave a 70 percent approval rating for the concept. African-Americans and households earning under \$40,000 a year also show very high numbers of support (76.5 percent and 75 percent, respectively).

The corporate tax credit concept for donations to scholarship foundations or local schools had widespread approval ratings in the poll, as well. Nearly three in four Americans surveyed supported the idea, with more than 78 percent approval among blacks and 80 percent approval among Hispanics.

Education tax credit programs have withstood challenges in court, as well. Six consecutive court challenges have gone in favor of tax credit legislation. The courts have found that tax credits merely allow families to keep a greater portion of their own private money and do not involve the transfer of public funds to schools or individuals.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, education tax credits bypass the potential threat of government meddling. Many private school administrators are afraid to accept government assistance due to the threat of greater government regulation that would compromise the autonomy and integrity of the school. Vouchers are particularly susceptible to government regulation. In Milwaukee, for example, schools involved in the district's voucher program are required to permit students to "opt-out" of religious activities—in effect, watering down the curriculum of the schools. Education tax credits, however, are more insulated from government regulation than vouchers because tax credits involve private money and do not constitute "public" spending.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for giving me this time to discuss the future of education reform in America. We have all seen the effects of a government monopoly on our education system, and it isn't good. The absence of competition only benefits bureaucrats, not children.